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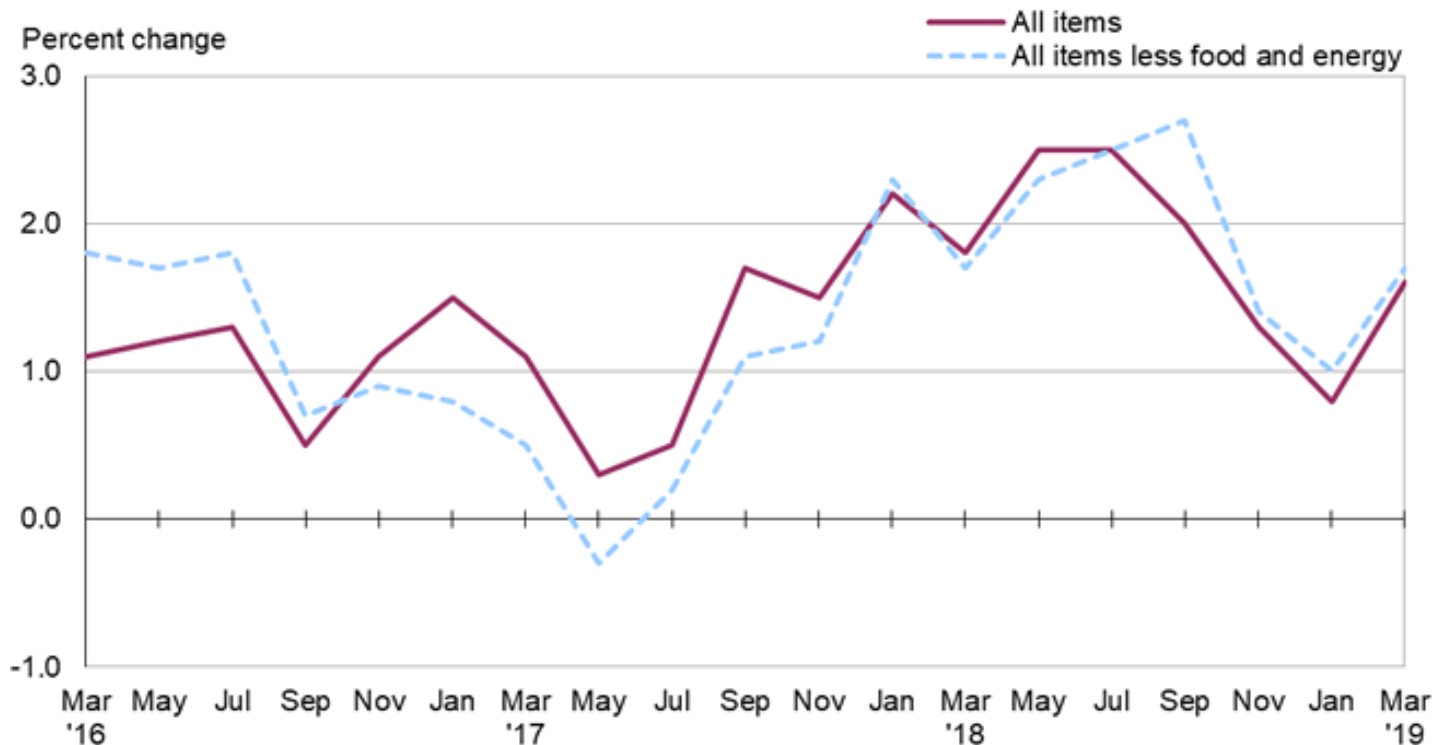
## Consumer Price Index, Washington-Arlington-Alexandria – March 2019

### Area prices up 0.7 percent since January, 1.6 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Washington-Arlington-Alexandria increased 0.7 percent from January to March, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that the recent increase was due mostly to a 0.5-percent rise in the all items less food and energy index. The energy index and the food index also increased since January, up 4.7 and 0.5 percent, respectively. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, month-to-month changes may reflect the impact of seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months, the CPI-U advanced 1.6 percent, primarily reflecting a 1.5-percent increase in the all items less food and energy index. (See [chart 1](#) and [table A](#).) Since March 2018, the food index and the energy index also advanced, up 2.6 and 1.2 percent, respectively. (See [table 1](#).)

**Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV, March 2016–March 2019**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

## Food

After a 1.6-percent increase from November to January, the food index rose 0.5 percent over the last two months. Prices for food away from home were up 0.8 percent, and those for food at home edged up 0.3 percent since January. Within the food at home component, higher prices for items such as fresh fish and seafood and bread were moderated by lower prices for carbonated drinks and frozen and freeze dried prepared foods.

Food prices increased 2.6 percent over the year. Prices were higher for both food at home (2.9 percent) and food away from home (2.3 percent) since March 2018.

## Energy

Since January, the energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, advanced 4.7 percent, due mainly to an 8.3-percent increase in gasoline prices. Prices were also higher for electricity (1.9 percent), and unchanged for utility (piped) gas service over the past two months.

Energy prices rose 1.2 percent since March 2018. Increases in both utility (piped) gas service prices (10.6 percent) and electricity prices (2.2 percent) were moderated by lower prices for gasoline (-1.5 percent).

## All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy increased 0.5 percent since January. An increase in prices for shelter (0.6 percent), particularly those for lodging away from home, led the increase in the all items less food and energy index. Prices were also higher for medical care (1.0 percent) and household furnishings and operations (1.2 percent), among others.

Since March 2018, the index for all items less food and energy rose 1.5 percent. The advance was led by higher prices for shelter (1.7 percent); household furnishings and operations (7.1 percent) and recreation (3.9 percent) were among the other indexes that had increases over the year. Education and communication prices were down 2.8 percent since March 2018.

**Table A. Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV, CPI-U 2-month and 12-month percent changes, all items index, not seasonally adjusted**

Month	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month
January.....	-1.1	-0.2	-0.2	1.5	0.2	1.5	0.9	2.2	0.5	0.8
March .....	1.2	0.2	0.8	1.1	0.4	1.1	-0.1	1.8	0.7	1.6
May.....	0.7	0.6	0.8	1.2	0.0	0.3	0.7	2.5		
July .....	-0.3	0.3	-0.2	1.3	0.0	0.5	0.1	2.5		
September.....	0.6	0.7	-0.3	0.5	0.9	1.7	0.4	2.0		
November.....	-0.4	0.5	0.2	1.1	0.0	1.5	-0.7	1.3		

**The Consumer Price Index for May 2019 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, June 12, 2019, at 8:30 a.m. (EDT).**

## Technical Note

The Consumer Price Index for Washington-Arlington-Alexandria is published bi-monthly. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. The Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes CPIs for two population groups: (1) a CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) which covers approximately 94 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban

Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers approximately 28 percent of the total population. The CPI-U includes, in addition to wage earners and clerical workers, groups such as professional, managerial, and technical workers, the self-employed, short-term workers, the unemployed, and retirees and others not in the labor force.

The CPI is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, and fuels, transportation fares, charges for doctors' and dentists' services, drugs, and the other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. Each month, prices are collected in 75 urban areas across the country from about 5,000 housing units and approximately 22,000 retail establishments--department stores, supermarkets, hospitals, filling stations, and other types of stores and service establishments. All taxes directly associated with the purchase and use of items are included in the index.










































The index measures price changes from a designated reference date (1982-84) that equals 100.0. An increase of 16.5 percent, for example, is shown as 116.5. This change can also be expressed in dollars as follows: the price of a base period "market basket" of goods and services in the CPI has risen from \$10 in 1982-84 to \$11.65. For further details see the CPI home page on the Internet at [www.bls.gov/cpi](http://www.bls.gov/cpi) and the BLS Handbook of Methods, Chapter 17, The Consumer Price Index, available on the Internet at [www.bls.gov/opub/hom/pdf/homch17.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/opub/hom/pdf/homch17.pdf).

In calculating the index, price changes for the various items in each location are averaged together with weights that represent their importance in the spending of the appropriate population group. Local data are then combined to obtain a U.S. city average. Because the sample size of a local area is smaller, the local area index is subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than the national index. In addition, local indexes are not adjusted for seasonal influences. As a result, local area indexes show greater volatility than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. **Note: Area indexes do not measure differences in the level of prices between cities; they only measure the average change in prices for each area since the base period.**

The **Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MA-WV, Core Based Statistical Area** includes the District of Columbia; the counties of Calvert, Charles, Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George's in Maryland; the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Manassas, and Manassas Park and the counties of Arlington, Clarke, Culpeper, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, Prince William, Rappahannock, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Warren in Virginia; and the county of Jefferson in West Virginia.















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**Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV, (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted)**

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Jan. 2019	Feb. 2019	Mar. 2019	Mar. 2018	Jan. 2019	Feb. 2019
All items.....		262.304		264.257	1.6	0.7	
Food and beverages .....		252.121		253.071	2.4	0.4	
Food .....		256.943		258.260	2.6	0.5	
Food at home .....		246.786	246.758	247.462	2.9	0.3	0.3
Cereals and bakery products .....		323.874		323.483	2.3	-0.1	
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs.....		261.827		260.408	-0.9	-0.5	
Dairy and related products .....		237.199		231.555	-2.9	-2.4	
Fruits and vegetables .....		269.271		277.873	6.4	3.2	
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1) .....		225.757		216.871	5.2	-3.9	
Other food at home .....		200.629		204.959	5.1	2.2	
Food away from home.....		270.709		272.855	2.3	0.8	
Alcoholic beverages .....		205.579		202.878	0.1	-1.3	
Housing .....		275.197		277.236	2.4	0.7	
Shelter .....		330.803	330.329	332.881	1.7	0.6	0.8
Rent of primary residence .....		362.750	361.862	363.442	1.9	0.2	0.4
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2).....		338.359	338.017	338.728	1.6	0.1	0.2
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2) .....		338.359	338.017	338.728	1.6	0.1	0.2
Fuels and utilities.....		233.631		236.620	4.2	1.3	
Household energy .....		183.262	184.905	185.705	4.2	1.3	0.4
Energy services.....		187.667	189.382	190.336	4.3	1.4	0.5
Electricity .....		208.230	209.554	212.259	2.2	1.9	1.3
Utility (piped) gas service .....		139.178	141.513	139.197	10.6	0.0	-1.6
Household furnishings and operations .....		109.574		110.871	7.1	1.2	
Apparel .....		169.674		167.026	3.0	-1.6	
Transportation .....		209.645		214.389	-0.4	2.3	
Private transportation .....		208.973		213.577	0.6	2.2	
New and used motor vehicles(3).....		94.272		94.892	1.3	0.7	
New vehicles(1).....		200.675		199.836	1.5	-0.4	
Used cars and trucks(1) .....		296.017		300.166	0.4	1.4	
Motor fuel .....		216.226	217.007	234.003	-1.5	8.2	7.8
Gasoline (all types).....		213.410	214.232	231.203	-1.5	8.3	7.9
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4).....		207.311	208.157	225.222	-1.7	8.6	8.2
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5).....		221.012	222.146	236.622	0.9	7.1	6.5
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4).....		235.045	235.369	248.990	-0.8	5.9	5.8
Motor vehicle insurance(1).....		845.825		845.825	-1.4	0.0	
Medical care .....		451.511		456.233	0.5	1.0	
Recreation(3).....		119.440		119.388	3.9	0.0	
Education and communication(3).....		149.002		148.590	-2.8	-0.3	
Tuition, other school fees, and child care(1) .....		1,359.223		1,362.448	-1.5	0.2	
Other goods and services .....		411.709		416.659	3.1	1.2	
<b>Commodity and service group</b>							
Commodities .....		180.758		181.747	1.4	0.5	

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

**Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV, (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted) - Continued**

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Jan. 2019	Feb. 2019	Mar. 2019	Mar. 2018	Jan. 2019	Feb. 2019
Commodities less food and beverages .....		144.544		145.509	0.7	0.7	
Nondurables less food and beverages...		190.720		193.240	0.5	1.3	
Durables .....		101.787		101.607	1.0	-0.2	
Services .....		336.168		339.041	1.8	0.9	
<b>Special aggregate indexes</b>							
All items less shelter .....		234.744		236.641	1.6	0.8	
All items less medical care .....		253.376		255.196	1.7	0.7	
Commodities less food .....		147.339		148.178	0.7	0.6	
Nondurables .....		220.507		222.264	1.5	0.8	
Nondurables less food .....		191.788		193.895	0.4	1.1	
Services less rent of shelter(2) .....		353.458		357.410	1.9	1.1	
Services less medical care services .....		325.128		327.669	1.8	0.8	
Energy .....		201.242	202.520	210.692	1.2	4.7	4.0
All items less energy .....		270.373		271.749	1.7	0.5	
All items less food and energy .....		274.058		275.451	1.5	0.5	

**Footnotes**

- (1) Indexes on a November 1977=100 base.
- (2) Indexes on a November 1982=100 base.
- (3) Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.
- (4) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.
- (5) Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.